



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 30, 2010

CONTACT:
Sue Walitsky 202-224-4524 or
202-320-0819

CARDIN SAYS SENATE VOTE PROTECTS CRITICAL MARYLAND-BASED NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

Funding for BARC, Chesapeake Bay and Port of Baltimore would have been at risk

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Senate Budget Committee, released the following statement regarding an earmark-related measure defeated in the Senate today that if passed would have greatly impacted key programs based in Maryland.

“I opposed the Coburn amendment because the broad way it was worded would have caused great confusion in funding necessary federal programs and it would have blocked the ability of Congress to set priorities for the nation. Such restrictions could damage vital programs that support our nation’s infrastructure and economy.

“The confusing Coburn language would have limited funding for federal facilities like the USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) or the White Oak campus of the newly consolidated Food and Drug Administration – both vital to our entire country’s food and health safety. These are federal facilities supporting national programs, but in Senator Coburn’s view, funding to support them would constitute an earmark. Similarly, the EPA’s Chesapeake Bay program – which benefits multiple Mid-Atlantic states and is considered an ecosystem of global importance – would have been jeopardized, as would the Army Corps of Engineer’s restoration of Poplar Island, which is essential to the operation of the Port of Baltimore. The restoration of the Mid-Bay Islands (Barren and James) would have been stopped before they got started, even though the project is backed by an economic analysis that has been peer reviewed and approved. The Port generates 50,700 jobs in Maryland with \$3.7 billion in wages and salaries. Additionally, there are approximately 68,300 related and indirect jobs associated with Port activities. Senator Coburn’s language would have blocked Maryland’s Senators from supporting one of the most important economic engines in our state.

“If Senator Coburn’s language had been approved, the Purple Line in the Washington suburbs and the Red Line in Baltimore would have been blocked from future funding because these projects are not already authorized. Each has an economic analysis demonstrating that they would be among the most cost-effective such transit projects in the country, serving tens of thousands of passengers and supporting two regional economies.

“Let’s act smartly without hampering critical functions of our government, so we can get down to the real work of balancing our budget, cutting our deficit, and helping put Americans back to work.”

###